CLAIMS

Claims 1 through 12 (Cancelled).

13. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus employing an error distribution process to convert an image represented with multiple values into an image provided in binary representation, comprising:

an input block subtracting from data of a target pixel successively input an error from a neighboring pixel;

a thresholding block thresholding and outputting said data of said target pixel subjected to a subtraction in said input block;

an error calculation block subtracting from a thresholded value output from said thresholding block a value corresponding to said data of said target pixel having been subjected to said subtraction in said input block and not yet thresholded, to obtain an error;

an error operation block multiplying an error obtained from said error calculation block by a distribution weighting coefficient to calculate an error to be distributed to a neighboring pixel before said neighboring pixel is processed, said distribution weighting coefficient simply decreasing as a distance from said target pixel increases; and

a threshold operation block adding to a threshold value used in said thresholding block a second image pattern related to a first image pattern introduced into an output image as a result of an image processing provided by said input block, said thresholding block, said error calculation block and said error operation block;

wherein said second image pattern has a predetermined angle, with an absolute value greater than zero, relative to said first image pattern.

2

14. (Original) The image processing apparatus of claim 13, wherein said second image pattern is analogous to said first image pattern.

15. (Cancelled).

16. (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus of claim ~~15~~ 13, wherein in processing a color image, said second image pattern varies in angle for each image of a color obtained by separating an image in color.

17. (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus of claim 13, wherein in processing a color image said distribution weighting coefficient varies for each image of a color obtained by separating an image in color.

18. (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus of claim 13, wherein in processing a color image said second image pattern varies for each image of a color obtained by separating an image in color.

19. A method of processing an image, employing an error distribution process to convert an image represented with multiple values into an image provided in binary representation, comprising the steps of:

subtracting from data of a target pixel successively input an error from a neighboring pixel;

thresholding and thus outputting said data of said target pixel subjected to a subtraction in said step of subtracting;

subtracting from said value thresholded and output a value corresponding to said data of said target pixel having been subjected to said subtraction and not yet thresholded, to obtain an error; and

multiplying said error by a distribution weighting coefficient to calculate an error to be distributed to a neighboring pixel before said neighboring pixel is processed, said distribution weighting coefficient simply decreasing as a distance from said target pixel increases,

wherein a series of said steps provides an image processing providing an output image having a first image pattern introduced therein and a second image pattern related to said first image pattern is added to said threshold value, and wherein said second image pattern has a predetermined angle, with an absolute value greater than zero, relative to said first image pattern.

20. (Cancelled)

21. The image processing [apparatus] method of claim 20 19, wherein in processing a color image, said second image pattern varies in angle for each image of a color obtained by separating an image in color.

22. (New) The image processing apparatus of claim 13, wherein said threshold value is changed by said thresholding block based on said input.

23. (New) The image processing method of claim 19, wherein said step of thresholding changes a threshold value based on said input.